



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 5b
June 16, 2020

Angélica Infante-Green
Commissioner

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TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner *A. Infante*

RE: Delegation of Authority to Commissioner to Temporarily Waive
Certain Requirements of Educator Certification Regulations

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health emergency. The pandemic caused a cessation of in-person education for all RI Pre-K-12 schools, institutions of higher education (IHEs), and educator preparation providers (EPPs). These Rhode Island educational institutions moved to distance and virtual learning. Though PK-12 education in Rhode Island has seen many successes compared to other states and districts across the United States, traditional opportunities related to educator certification, such as professional learning and testing (required for preliminary and full certification in Rhode Island) were interrupted. Some Professional Learning was offered virtually and new Professional Learning was added to support distance and virtual learning, but some Rhode Island educators may not have been able to attend these virtual options due to their educator responsibilities, health issues, or family care situations. Prometric Centers, where ETS *Praxis* tests are administered, were closed in March. A *Praxis* at home virtual testing option was added in late May and Prometric Centers slowly began reopening in June with reduced capacity, but not all *Praxis* tests are offered under currently available options and educators may face additional delays when attempting to schedule their tests.

To address current conditions and provide flexibility to educators, this request follows requests made across the nation to delegate authority to a state-level official to temporarily waive certain requirements of educator certification regulations. This request would only remain in effect until January 1, 2021, to ensure that the waivers solely affect those Rhode Island educators impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education delegate to the Commissioner of Education, as of this date, the authority to temporarily waive any certification requirements in the Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island relating to professional learning units and testing as she deems necessary to address the impact of COVID-19, and to take appropriate interim measures to implement any such temporary waivers. This delegation of authority shall remain in effect until January 1, 2021.